

THE
Decisive QUESTION, &c.

CONCERNING

Eternal Reprobation:

WHEREIN

Both Sides of the Question

Are impartially Consider'd:

AND THE

Different Consequences

Arising from either Side

OBSERV'D and REMARK'D.

By *J. B. Crocer*, in *Canterbury*.

Ecclesiastes, Chap. ix. Ver. 10.

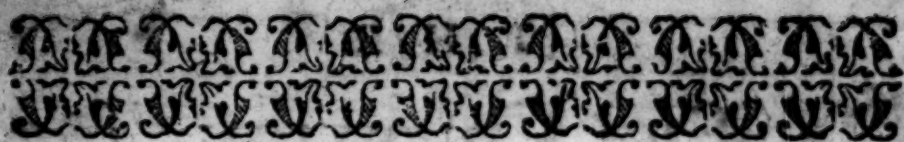
*Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy
Might; for there is no Work, nor Device, nor
Knowledge, nor Wisdom, in the Grave, whither
thou goest.*

CANTERBURY:

Printed by *J. Abree*, for the AUTHOR:

And sold at his Shop in the Butter-market; and by the
Booksellers. Also may be had of the Newsmen. 1752.

(Price, Four Pence.)



To the Reader.

IT may not be improper to inform the Reader, that the Author of this Treatise was educated, and continued a Predestinarian many Years; but looking forward into the Consequences necessarily following that Doctrine (particularly as propagated by Mr. Gill) he judiciously alter'd his Belief; and as this contains his Motives for that Alteration, he was advis'd to publish it, for the Advantage of those who labour under such Mistakes, that they may view their Faith truly represented without Disguise: For as the Author is unacquainted with Rhetoric, and the other deluding Arts, which too often draw Falshood in the Colours of Truth, and clothe Vice in the Habit of Virtue, he has undisguisedly represented Things; which is no small Recommendation of this Treatise, to sincere Minds and well-meaning Hearts, to whom I recommend it.



The *Decisive* Question, &c.

IT may be question'd, Whether, the King of Kings, according as Mr. *Gill* and others have represented his Dealings toward his human Creatures, doth exceed the Mercy, Goodness and Justice of our King *George*, towards his 272 Subjects, that were lately Slaves in *Barbary*? Of whom let it be suppos'd, that, they were not made Prisoners in Battle, but decoy'd on Shore to a sumptuous Entertainment; and, when intoxicated, stopt, and made Slaves: Well, our King was not blameable for their being thus brought into Slavery and Bondage; yet, he ransomed them all voluntarily in pure Mercy and Goodness; of which Number 270 took this Opportunity of being restor'd to Liberty, but the other two Slaves refused to embrace it, and thereby made the Ransom vain, with regard to themselves; however, the Fault of their continuing in Slavery is not the King's, but their own. If the King had ransomed only half of them, the Deficiency had been in the King, and his Justice would not have charg'd their not returning, on the unredeem'd Slaves themselves: Well, is Man. so just, sure

God's more just than he, and could not doom poor Infants Misery? This I mention, because some harsh Authors, and their careless infatuated Readers and Admirers, hold, That Millions of Millions of Infants will suffer eternal Misery. And this lately appear'd in the Face of one of them, who seem'd to make a Scoff at that common Saying, *That if Children dying in Infancy are not happy, what will become of us?* Yet, if you ask those careless Readers to be plain with you on this Point, they will generally Answer, That they will not meddle with the State of Infants: Notwithstanding which Answer, they greedily read over those monstrous ~~assertions, which hold,~~ That *Multitudes of Infants will either be annihilated, or sent to the infernal Lake.* Now, if dying Infants perish, it must be for *Adam's Sin*, for they have none of their own: And if it be for his Sin, then it will follow, That the great Ransom, said to be a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World, was paid but in Part; which is a Doctrine (I believe, that) few dare in plain Words to affirm.

But to return unto the above Question, concerning which the following ten Things may be observ'd, viz.

First, That if our King's pure Mercy and Goodness had not induc'd him to send a Ransom for the whole Number of Slaves, but that he had pass'd by half of them as unworthy his Notice; yet if his Justice were such, that he would not lay the Fault of not returning upon those, that were not redeem'd; for any to pretend that he would, is belying his Justice; and declaring, that they

they rather chuse to represent him as unjust, than to praise his Goodness towards them, where his Bounty was extended. But,

Secondly, If the King had not sent a Ransom, the Slaves must have continued still in Slavery; but when they were redeem'd, the two that returned not, had none to blame but themselves; if he had redeemed only half, the Deficiency had been in him, and it would then have plainly appear'd, that his Benevolence was not extended towards those, whom he redeemed not; And those who deny this, deny the Truth, and give themselves the Lye. But, alas! What is all temporal Slavery, or the greatest Cruelty on Earth, when compar'd with eternal Misery? 'Tis even less than the Bite of the smallest Flea.

Thirdly, What Comparison will the above Case bear with those harsh self-contradicting and dishonourable Notions, which for want of duly weighing and considering, are blindly held and warmly urg'd by the Predestinarians? Who have wrote, first, That God absolutely willed the Fall of Man; which Fall, all must allow was the beginning of Man's Ruin. Secondly, That he determined not to give Grace to part of those fallen Mankind, tho' they could no more save themselves, than the Slaves could return Home without a Ransom. By which Expression it is plain, that they mean, That God would not have all to be saved, as the Scripture plainly affirmeth; but had doom'd and design'd for the greatest Part of his chiefest Work in this lower Creation (Mankind) to eternal Misery. But, surely, this was never so ordain'd; for it would have been a great Gratification

cation to Satan, that grand Opposer of God's Goodness, and Enemy of the human Race. But,

Fourthly, Suppose the 272 Men, above mentioned, had been impressed, and forc'd to fight, in a weak Vessel, unfit for War; and the King seem'd unconcerned about it, till they were taken and made Slaves: This differs from the above Supposition, wherein they were supposed to have been decoy'd, and reflects, seemingly, upon the King, but the Fault was in the Lords, for sending an old decay'd Ship; but be that as it will, yet we may certainly challenge, as one saith, the very Enemies of the King, that not one of them, of any Credit, will dare to say, That the King would or might with Justice charge the unransomed Slaves with the Fault of not coming Home. What! will not an Enemy of the King say thus of him? Then certainly it must be very monstrous in all those who account themselves the Favourites of Heaven, the Elect of God, to write, That the Divine Being absolutely willed the Fall of Man; and determined, not to give Grace to recover, far the greatest Part of them. But our King might, if he pleas'd, have redeem'd none of the Slaves; and it were pure Mercy if he redeem'd some; so it's pure Mercy if Almighty God redeems any poor Sinners: But we read, *That he willeth all should be saved.* And, as Mr. Henry writes, *God hath a Good-will towards the Salvation of all Men; and that none will perish, but thro' their own Default.* We likewise read, *That Christ was a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World; and that God sent his Son into the World, not to condemn the World, but that*
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the World thro' him might be saved. These are Christ's own Words; and certainly we ought not to think them false, but believe them to be as true as those Places of Scripture are, which make mention of his special Choice, of some to be Prophets, some Apostles, some Preachers, &c. *Ephes. iv. 11.* But,

Fifthly, Suppose, now, that two Men of equal Worth and Merit, stood Candidates for the same City, in order for one of them to be chosen a Member of the House of Commons; and that the Choice of one of them, is purely the Cause of his Admittance, and of the others Exclusion: Now his Exclusion was not his own Fault, but the Fault of those who refus'd to chuse him.

Sixthly, If St. Paul spake true, when he said, That God willetb that all Men might be saved; and that Christ was a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World; and that the whole World thro' him might be saved: But here, be pleas'd to make a Pause; and consider and rightly weigh the Words, *might be saved*, and *can't be saved*: Might be saved, and shan't be saved, that's like saying, It is, and 'tis not; which is a plain Contradiction. But,

Seventhly, Our King is not obliged to force the Slaves home; and if he sends a Ransom for all, yet some of them may (as we hear two of them did) flight, neglect, and refuse to embrace his Kindness, and so remain and die in Slavery: So likewise the King of Kings seldom (if ever) useth Force; but, by the Ministry of his Word, woes and invites poor Sinners to accept of Mercy; saying, *I am the Lord, merciful and gracious; long Suffer-*

Suffering, and abounding in Goodness and Truth. He changeth not ; therefore is it that we are not consumed. Surely they must have a very low Idea of God's Love to poor *Adam* ; who having offended him, and had nothing to give, whereby to make Satisfaction, God sent his only and beloved Son, to suffer and die, as a full Satisfaction to his offended Justice. O, the height and depth of that Love ! None can comprehend it. God so loved his Creature Man, that he himself chose, appointed and accepted of Christ's Death, for a full Ransom for him : And for any to alledge, that the imputed Guilt of *Adam's* Sin, was not ballanced by the Righteousness of Christ, greatly lessens the Ransom, and highly reflects on him, that chose and appointed it. But, as by the Offence of one, many were made Sinners, so by the Obedience of one, many were made righteous ; that sure was a Balance, and much more than a Balance ; for where Sin abounded, Grace and Mercy much more abound. But as two of the Slaves disregarded and refused to embrace the Benefits of our King's Ransom, and thereby made the Ransom vain, with regard to themselves, and became the sole Cause of their continuing Slaves ; so have we great Reason to fear, that Multitudes will eternally perish for their own actual Sins and Rebellion against God ; who neglect and refuse to embrace his gracious Mercy ; will hear none of his Reproofs, but live without God in the World ; and declare by their Actions, that they desire to continue Slaves to Sin ; and to curse the Divine Being, rather than to bless and praise his Name ; our Eyes and Ears are continual Witnesses

ses of these Things. Now, from what has been observ'd before, it obviously appears, that the want of a Ransom is the sole Cause that the Slaves cannot return Home: Also, that the whole Cause of the Candidate's losing his Election, was in them that refused to chuse him; no Fault could be justly charged on him, or the Slaves; and those who charge the Fault on either of them, must be deem'd very simple; yea, they must belye their own Reason: For nothing can be more plain than this, That if the King sent a Ransom for all, the Fault cannot be in him, but must be in those who will not make Use of the happy Opportunity of obtaining their Liberty. Also, if he sent a Ransom but for half the Slaves, the other half could not then be blam'd in the least for not coming Home. And those who say, the Ransom was not sent for all, do thereby manifestly charge the whole Cause and Fault (of not returning) on the Ransomer; and in Effect say, That he had no Good-will towards them, but design'd that they should not return into Liberty. But,

Eighthly, And here I desire to make a long Stop,—and lay my Thoughts at the Feet of Jesus, begging the Help of the Divine Spirit, which is able to instruct the most Illiterate, that it may now guide me thro' this great Task, which, of my self, I know I am incapable of doing suitably to my Wish; but do humbly hope, by the Assistance of that Holy Spirit, rightly to weigh, not with a quick and careless Thought, which is too often soon over, without Profit or Improvement, but sincerely to consider, *First*, What is my most incumbent and greatest Duty to believe, concerning

God's perfect Justice and Goodness towards his Creatures: And after many Hours pensively spent (while others have slept) seriously considering both Sides of the Question, Whether I should do best to believe, *that God is the very best of Beings, the Fountain of perfect Justice, Goodness and Love to his Creatures, which undoubtedly far surpasses the highest Conceptions of Men, and is not perfectly known even unto Angels?* His Mercies are new every Morning, and constantly attend and guard us in the Night, when we are no Guard to ourselves. Or, *Secondly, Whether I should lessen my Belief in the Goodness of God, and account it less than what is in our own King towards the Barbarian Slaves?* If the King had ransomed only half of them, it would thereby plainly appear that he design'd the rest should stay; but his Justice would not lay the Blame on them for staying. And shall I, yea I dare not believe that Ninety-nine out of each Hundred of human Creatures, according as those harsh-notioned Men pretend to make it out, were so passed by, and left out of that infinite and incomprehensible Ransom, which was sent from the Bosom of perfect Justice, perfect Mercy, and compleat Love to poor Sinners; or can I believe that even half the Number of God's chiefest Creatures on Earth, were so passed by, and reprobated to an unalterable and endless State of Misery, which must be many Millions of Times more cruel and dreadful than the Condition of any earthly Slaves, or of any poor Infant, tho' its cruel Mother should leave it to starve in a Wood. And how can I believe that the Fountain of all Perfection should ever harbour so much as one

Thought

Thought of absolutely willing Man's Fall ; for that could be no other than absolutely willing him to Sin ; absolutely willing him to eat of that Fruit which God had so severely charged him on Pain of Death not to eat of. If God absolutely willed the Fall of Man, then poor *Adam's* Case was far worse (tho' in Paradise) than the Case of any Slaves in *Barbary* possibly could be ; since it may from thence be supposed, that *Lucifer*, the Prince of the Air, the Enemy to God and Man, was let loose upon him, with a ruinous Design. I dare not, nor ought not to believe such harsh and dishonourable Notions of my Maker, or to think that God had (as it were) laid a Trap to ensnare *Adam* and his Posterity. If God had absolutely willed the Fall of Man, his Justice is such, as he would never have charg'd the Fault thereof upon his Creatures.

But some pretend, there is a great Difference in the Case of our King and the Slaves, and the King of Kings and his Creatures ; for (as is before observ'd) if the King ransom'd only half the Slaves, the Fault of the other half's not returning would be in him ; but if he ransomed them all, the Fault of continuing in Slavery would be in them that refused to take the Opportunity of regaining their Liberty : But if it be consider'd either Way, the Fault is only one, and can be charg'd upon one Party only ; the other Party, Justice must certainly clear. But those who take upon them to vindicate eternal absolute Reprobation, charge the same with two Faults : First, on God's absolutely willing Man's Fall, and determining not to give Grace to some for their Salvation, and to recover

them from the Fall : And, secondly, sent no sufficient Ransom for them, but past them by, and fix'd them to a reprobate State, in order to suffer eternal Misery ; as both Supralapsarians and Sublapsarians state the Case ; which so highly reflects upon the Justice and Goodness of God, as amounts, I had like to have said, to Blasphemy. But when they have thus represented the best of Beings much more harsh and cruel than ever the worst of Tyrants on Earth came up to, if they are ask'd, will say, *Men are the Cause of their own Ruin* ; tho' they (as observ'd before) manifestly charge the first moving Cause in God's absolute Will, and in passing by his own Work, which himself pronounc'd very good, and therefore, surely not made, nor design'd for an evil End. But here I make a Stop — And humbly wish, that I was gifted with such Clearness of Thought and Fluency of Speech, as might set this Matter in its deserved Light, and disperse the thick *Egyptian* Darkness from the Minds of all my Friends, and from the Minds of all others. However, my Aim, I hope, is good, for it is to clear my Maker of all the Fault concerning his Creatures Ruin ; which that dreadful Doctrine of absolute Reprobation so highly charges him with.

The Supralapsarians date the passing by from Eternity, and so do the Sublapsarians date it ; and they both hold with the passing by ; which, as a certain Writer saith, *is the same with Reprobation*. But many of those who hold these harsh and dishonourable Notions, don't care to own them, or speak them out plain ; but all such, I bid read Mr. *Gill's* Cause of God and Truth, against Dr. *Whit-*

by, where they may see he writes thus, viz. *If Election be from Eternity, Reprobation must be so too, if some were then chosen, others were left and past by as early; that there cannot be the one without the other.* But some have said, they don't mind what Mr. Gill writes; and I am apt to believe, that they neither examine his Writings, nor the Writings of their other Authors, sufficiently to understand them; or else they could never please themselves in turning over so many Books, whose Authors Aim amounts to the same, as charging two Faults in the Ruin of Man, when there certainly is but one, and that in the Creature only. God permitted the Angels to fall, and *Adam* likewise; but we don't read he absolutely willed it. If the Angels fell of their own Accord, why not Man also? And if so, what Need is there of all this pro and con? surely, only to make out two Faults, when it really is but one.

If the King sent a Ransom for all, yet neglected to send Provision and a Ship to bring the Slaves Home, the Fault would still be in him; but if he sends all Necessaries, no Blame can be laid upon him: And so is the King of Kings free from all Blame; for what could he have done for his Vineyard, more than he hath done? And he plainly declares, *That he hath no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked; but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live.* And to this End hath sent his beloved Son, *that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* And as one lately said, *All that we need, or can wish for, is in him; and what can we desire more? He stands at the Door and knocks, till his Head is*

wet with the Dew, and his Locks with the Drops of the Night ; saying, Come, O come buy Wine and Milk, without Money and without Price, without any Merit of good Works. He calls and invites poor Sinners, by his Word and Ministers; and hath freely promised to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him: *Ask, (saith he) and ye shall receive.* But if they are so passed by, reprobated and fixed for eternal Misery, they can no more obey the Call, or be benefited by such Promises, than a dead Man can rise from his Grave and eat, or than those two Slaves, that are left behind, if they were called and invited to come, can possibly walk upon the mighty Waters of the Sea, and thereby come Home safe.

If the King of Kings has so past by, and fix'd by an absolute unalterable Decree, that far the greatest Number of Men shall for ever suffer infernal Misery and Torments, 'tis impossible for poor feeble Mankind to avoid or prevent it. But some have weakly said, That every Man hath sufficient Grace given him to make his temporal Life happy; but what availeth it, if it contains no more, and he be past by, and have not that effectual Grace given him to make him eternally happy, but that he must for ever dwell in eternal Torments, purely for want of having effectual Grace. Surely, any one who will suffer himself to have but a slight, yea, but a very slight Thought, of what it is to dwell in eternal Misery, and believes that all Things are thus fixt, and no Remedy left to avoid it, but that such infinite Numbers of People must unavoidably go into endless Misery, he must certainly be stupid to the highest.

highest Degree, if he don't consent to this Truth, that the State of Mankind is infinitely below, and infinitely worse, than the State of the most despicable and meanest Creature on Earth.

*The Brute's more happy, then may Mortals say,
Because their Sorrows soon do pass away.*

My Aim (in taking this Trouble upon my self) is to justify the Justice and Goodness of God to Mankind, and the Good of my Friends and all others, whom I wish for ever happy; and do sincerely long and petition for their reforming from all harsh and dishonourable Notions of God, and Christ, who was a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World. But they say, it was for the World of the Elect; and if they can find those Words in Scripture, then I may venture to believe them. But as we find two of the Slaves made our King's Ransom vain, as to themselves, and the Fault is intirely their own, so have we too much Reason to fear, that many by their actual Sins will make the Death of Christ in vain, also, so far as relates to themselves, because they will not come unto Christ to be saved, but disregard and slight his free and wonderful Love towards them. But if they were so passed by from Eternity, and no effectual Grace given them, whereby to enable them to come, accept and embrace his Bounty; then, as Bishop Tillotson saith, it would be the most idlest Time that could be spent to advise them, to do that, which was impossible for them to perform. If a Master bid his Servant pull down the Moon, which he knows is impos-

impossible for him to do; will he hang his Servant for not doing it? But,

Ninthly; and here I must make a long Pause. — And well consider, lest I am charged by the Learned, as I have often been by the Unlearned, of being a strong *Armenian*. Mr. Gill, call'd a Man of the Pen, Douty Writer, and compar'd him to Fools; and therefore I must expect some stranger Title, for daring to contradict the learned Mr. Gill and others; since, it's Learning makes a Man; and may be of good Effect, when put to a right Use; but it's Grace that makes a Christian; of which Number I hope many of the Unlearned are. Well, many of the Learned have greatly studied God's Secrets, and pretend from thence to gather their Notions; but there are ten to one as deeply learned as themselves, and have as much studied both Sides of the Question, and found that the former are very wrong; and have kindly advised, and cautioned them against representing the Best of Beings, thus cruel to his own Work, which he voluntarily made, all which they have despis'd, as not worth reading; therefore 'twill be no Wonder if they commit these to the Flames: However be that as it will, my Aim (as before) is to clear my Maker from being the Cause of his Creature's Ruin, and laying the one, and only Fault upon them that wilfully perish, for they must be try'd at the last Day before a just Judge; and a just Judge will not condemn a Man for a Fault when he himself has been the Cause of it. And therefore Mr. Gill may write, that God absolutely willed the Fall of Man; and deter-

determined not to give Grace to save numberless Numbers, till he wears out both his Pen and his Brains : No one can believe him, that gives himself but Leave to consider, what a Monster of Cruelty he lays out the most just, holy and good Being to be ; *even worse than the Devil*, as a learned Writer justly observes, upon supposing their Notions to be true. But they say, *the Scriptures Meaning is so*. No, that can never be ; such Scripture had better never been explain'd, than to be so turn'd, as to represent God worse than the Devil.

Let it be suppos'd now, that a cruel Mother was deliver'd of two Children in a Wood, one of which she took up, carried away, and tenderly nurs'd ; but the other she pass'd by, and determin'd to leave for the wild Beasts to tare in Pieces, or to be starv'd for want of a Breast, tho' she had one for each Child : Well, she might have left both Children there to perish ; for the Case supposes none knew of it but herself, and that there was no Restraint laid upon her : She was indeed worthy of Praise for saving one ; but yet leaving the other to perish, must deem her guilty of Murder, and of great Cruelty towards her own poor helpless Infant ; for by leaving it, she was the very Cause of its Misery and Death. And how any dare charge the Judge of all the Earth (who cannot but do right) with being ten Thousand Times more cruel to Mankind, than any Cruelty on Earth can equal, is most monstrous to think of !

How shocking then must the Doctrine of absolute Reprobation appear to the Minds of all impartial and thoughtful Men, who seriously con-

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sider the Cruelty of it; also the Dishonour it casts on the best and wisest of Beings, as if he had from Eternity decreed, appointed and ordain'd, that Millions of Millions of Men should unavoidably perish, purely to satisfy his Sovereign Will and Pleasure in their eternal Ruin.

Now if but one Infant perish for *Adam's Sin*, it proves, that Christ's Death hath not fully satisfied for that Sin; or else that that Infant doth perish purely as a Creature, and not as a sinful Creature; *which Doctrine is to be abhorr'd*, as Mr. Gill writes, Book 2. Page 29. Also he writes in his Book call'd *Truth Defended*, that, *They don't look upon Sin to be the Cause of the Decree of Reprobation, which can only be the Will of God*. Now as Reprobation seems to be the first preparatory Cause, and Sin, only the second Cause of the Creatures Ruin; on whom then doth he lay the Fault, but on God? O dreadful Thought! Who can think upon it without Horror and Detestation? One would think all who can scratch with a Pen, should, in Vindication of God, and out of Respect to their Friends and others, oppose such dishonourable Notions of the Deity. Before I believe such Notions, I must lose my Senses, close up my Eyes, part with my Reason, and read the Scriptures backward.

But poor illiterate I, have been charg'd with Blasphemy, for writing this Question, *viz. Whether it be a greater Offence to believe more of the Goodness of God toward his Creatures, or to believe less of it?* An earthly King is generally better pleased to hear his Goodness to his Subjects spoken of and praised, than to be represented
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an harsh and cruel Ruler ; for Goodness and Clemency win the Soul, but Cruelty makes it shy, and drives it further off. The Goodness of God leadeth to Repentance, and he would have all Men repent and be saved : So that I dare not believe, as those Secret-hunting Authors represent him to be, as absolutely willing, decreeing, passing by, and from Eternity fixing the unavoidable Ruin of his own Work ; his chiefest Work upon Earth.

But here I am obliged to make a short Stop,—lest any should say I have falsely represented Mr. Gill, as if he had charg'd two Faults in the Ruin of Man ; for in his Book, call'd *The Cause of God and Truth*, second Part, Page 20. he boldly charges the Whole on God, viz. *God did absolutely will Man's Fall, and determined not to give Grace to some, to save them.* Also in his Book, call'd *Truth Defended*, he writes, Page 18. that *They do not look upon Sin to be the Cause of Reprobation, which can only be the Will of God.* From which it's very plain, that he charges the whole Fault on the Creator, and none on the Creature.

But, *Tenthly*, From what I have said before, I would not have any think, that I intend to offend ; but sincerely wish, that what I have written, may stop my Friends, and all others, from ever more harbouring such harsh and dishonourable Notions of the best of Beings ; and hope I do as sincerely wish their eternal Happiness, as any Person does the Happiness of his Friend : Neither do I think their having such dishonourable Notions will unchristian them, or be the Cause of their being eternally miserable ;

they are, as it were, but half Believers, and partly in the Dark ; yet I hope God will be merciful unto them ; *but the Unbelievers will perish.*

I find by long Experience, that it's in vain to talk with these self-wise People ; who, without duly weighing, and seriously considering, on whom they lay the whole Cause and Fault of Man's Ruin ; they will presently tax you with being an *Armenian*, or Merit-monger, and one who ought to be made an *Anathema Maran-atha* : But it's no matter what Men account us, if God approves of us : And I humbly hope he will not be offended at my weak Endeavours to justify his Justice and Goodness towards his Creatures ; which by those monstrous Authors, and their deluded Admirers, is loaded with the greatest of Cruelties ; proceeding (I desire to hope) from their not rightly weighing, thinking upon, and considering whereunto such Notions must and will center ; to perceive which, cannot be done without great and wearisome Study, thinking the Matter over again, again and again ; for hurrying over many Books, without minding the Scheme, and what the Author aims at, will more confuse the Mind than help or improve it.

But is not the Design of these Authors to puzzle weak Minds, and make it a Party Cause ? or to sell their Books ? either of which is weak and wicked, But I had rather account it a thick Darkness on their Minds, which in their Hurry of Writing and Reading hinders them from perceiving the Consequences of their darling Doctrine. Mr. Gill writes (as has been mentioned before) *They don't look upon Sin to be the Cause of*
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Reprobation, but the Will of God. Now if any should suppose, that neither *Adam's Sin*, nor Sin foreseen, is the Cause of the Creature's Ruin, but the Will of God, the Cause; how the whole Fault can be justly charged on the Creature, none can tell. Surely, all such Authors have but very small Notions of what eternal Misery is; or else they could never speak of it so very lightly, as (seemingly) hardly to harbour one Thought about, whether their dearest Friends are doom'd to it from Eternity, or not. Those who hold such harsh Notions, (one would think by their Behaviour) have but little Concern for the Happiness of their Friend's Souls, or the Honour of God; *who taketh Pleasure in them that fear him, and hope in his Mercy*; but hath no Pleasure in those who thus strive to make his Ways unequal, and represent him thus cruel to his Creatures.

For what I have written I expect much Spatter; but be that as it will, I hope to account it as an excellent Oil.

If any of those Secret-hunters can, and do, clearly prove, That there is but one Fault in Man's Ruin; and clear the Almighty from that Fault; they would thereby do Justice to their Maker: But if we expect this, we may expect it till we are weary.

But suppose I should say, That I am persuaded, if not by Assurance, yet by a good Hope, thro' Grace, and not of myself, That nothing shall be able to separate me from the Love of God, *which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*, as *Rom. viii. 38, 39.* and also, *that I was passed from Death unto Life*; because I love the Brethren, in whom the Spirit of Christ

Christ appeareth, although they differ from me in some Points: But for saying this, 'tis likely I may be accounted an Hypocrite.

But to conclude, let it be also supposed, That I had been the first Author and Writer of these Words, viz. That God absolutely willed Man's Fall, to bring all Men into a State of Unbelief, and had determined to leave some in that State, and not to give them Grace, the only Thing that could cure them of Unbelief: Also, if I had said, That the Elect, notwithstanding they had, or might commit, the greatest Sins, yet none of them could be lost: Likewise, That the Non-elect had no Free-Will, and although they lived the most exact Lives that it was possible for them to live, yet they could not be happy; but being Vessels of Dishonour, they must unavoidably perish: And also if I had alledg'd, That Millions of Infants, who have no Sins of their own, yet must suffer eternal Misery, and that purely for *Adam's* Sin; I say, had I been the first Setter-forth of such Doctrines, What would you, or what could you have accounted me? a Promoter of the Honour and Cause of God? or a great Blasphemer and an *Antimonian*? Certainly the latter you would allot me, and nothing of the former. Then from whence doth that Zeal arise in you, to be so ready, and strive so much to vindicate, the Authors of those very harsh and cruel Notions? Certainly it proceeds from great Obstinacy, and the Want of Consideration.

Sure those Authors may be compar'd with the Men Mr. *Henry* writes of in *Jude*, who start Questions, raise Disputes, cause Divisions, and wi-
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den Breaches, purely to promote their own covetous Purposes and Designs.

One would think that any Person who holds such dishonourable Notions, (as is before mentioned) must blush at the very Thought of asking once to look within the Vail, where nothing but perfect Justice, Love and Goodness, surrounds and fills the Throne of Glory. Sure their Affections must soon drop and snatch back from that World, which Christ advised them to set their Affections upon.

If, as Mr. *Gill* writes, some were chosen, and others were passed by, then what Difference can be made between being left, past by, and reprobated? don't all three appear like a design'd Purpose of Ruin? And if the imputed Righteousness of the heavenly *Adam* hath extended as far as the imputed Guilt of our earthly *Adam's* first Sin; then that Sin is away, and is no more to be charg'd on his Person, as some vainly fancy, who don't consider, see where the Fault must center. But 'tis the *Saviour* that sins shall die for his own Sins, and be try'd for the same, and not for *Adam's* Sin.

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